## GRIM HUMOR OF PRIVATEERING IN OLD TIMES

Ruses of Yankee Skippers in Capturing
British Merchant Vessels or Escap
Views." During one of the land battles of the Revolution a cannon ball pierced frigate having no friendly intentions toward the privateersman. Capt. Nichols at first was not much perturbed by the stranger's actions, as he Nova Scotian coaster Mary, laden with No British Merchant Vessels or Escaping From Men of War

in connection with the cen- foe

HLE much has been written jured before they finally shook off their

m the enemy and made pris- York in one short cruise in the English rom the enemy and made prisnot fewer than 25,000 British and soldiers on the high seas.

cering was attended by hard defined five craft valued at \$500,000? Had not that wretched little schooner Thomas of New Hampshire gold knocks, frequently by hard generally with hard tack. In was a very serious business, spite of the perils and priva
york in one short cruise in the English crew was taken aboard the man of war. A British prize crew was put aboard the Nerina with orders to make schooner Thomas of New Hampshire gold the Nerina with orders to make schooner Thomas of New Hampshire gold the Nerina with orders to make for Halifax. After the cruiser had been needed to balance his overstrained dropped out of sight the curiosity of the British prize master got the better of his judgment, and he opened the hold to take a look at the cargo, and everything of value in her, snug under her guns. of the perils and privad time privateersman was

worth of prizes? And that he reason incidentally to appropriate any stray days realized \$1,500,000, while the Rhode article of value that happened to be it was to be frigated. his grim sense of humor Island Yankee in her six cruises seized lying around loose.

the walls of a famous American college. A sea parallel of this is had in the ac-tion between the Saucy Jack and the Pelham, an American eighteen pound shot demolishing one of the Chesapeake-Shannon pictures in the Pelham's cabin.

Possibly the most unwelcome "cargo" tenary of the War of 1812 about the naval operations struggle, little attention has to the American privateers same war, who captured 1,345 of the privateers war, who captured 1,345 of the enemy and made prise. captured in this war was found in the hold of the brig Nerina, an American crew was taken aboard the man of

was confident of outsailing her. His dry goods, sailed from St. John for confidence quickly evaporated under the heat of the pursuit, which, to use schooner his own words, became "too hot for

comfort. Extreme measures were resorted to in the hope of increasing the privateer's Her pace was substantially quickened, but somehow or other that lumbering frigate persisted in gaining. Finally Nichols was compelled to throw overboard every movable article on his craft, even to the ballast and twelve

It was then that Nichols learned that

That was just too slow for her flying heels And just too big to whip.

The Cadet's commander was discreet as well as valorous, and realizing that he had no chance in a fight, he kept the two craft in sight in the hope that some turn in the wheel of fortune would prove to his advantage. He did not have long to wait, for when only a few hours out of St. John the convoy met the privateer Charles Stewart, Capt. have been sacrificed too, had they not been needed to balance his overstrained began an action with the escorting

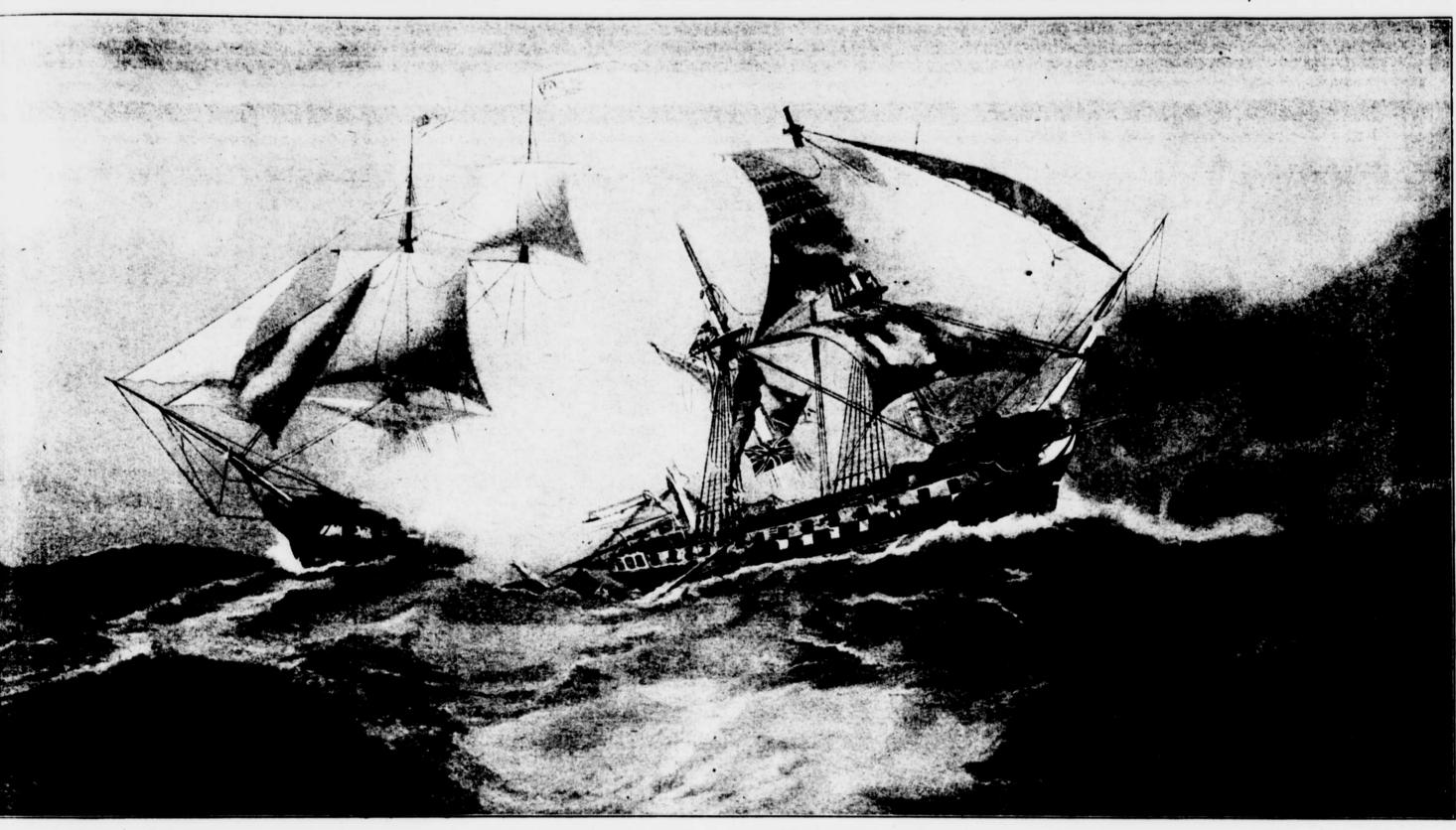
Just as the Charles Stewart seeme to be getting the better of the fight a fifth sail appeared on the scene, which Purcell took to be a British cruiser, and It was then that Nichols learned that he immediately made sail in escape, the frigate was not an enemy's, but the This stranger, however, proved to be Queer Cargoes Among the Rich Spoils Brought Into Port

until, observing that the Dominica was safe, he laid his clipper schooner out for a long thrash into the teeth of the wind

-the Swaggerer thundering after her. As if to give additional zest to the chase a sail loomed up ahead of the Comet and, changing his course slightly, Boyle captured the British schooner Jane from Demerara for St. Thomas, laden with rum, sugar and coffee. The "lumbering efforts of the still pursuing Swaggerer," says the record, "to reach the swift privateer only afforded amuse-ment to our officers, and after coolly transferring the prisoners to his own ship and placing Prize Master Wild and windward, where he had the advantage

the buildog by sailing "under her nose caused him some anxiety. He noticed at long balls" and in other impudent that she seemed to be communicating ways tempting her into a hopeless chase with her consorts in an authoritative almost up to her tops and that she carried something on her deck that resembled a merchantman's boat. This "something" was a heavy gun con-cealed under a boat, for the stranger was none other than the fast British frigate Laurel, which had been fitted out expressly to cope with the American forty-four gun frigates.

But Shaler knew nothing of all this. He believed that she was a large transport. Nevertheless he approached with due caution. Gaining a position to



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THE TURNING POINT IN A BATTLE OF PRIVATEERS A !HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

when he ran alongside a supposed huge | wealth in the ascending scale. Indiaman and ordered her to lown her colors. The huge East Indiaman proved to be an English line tleship in disguise. On making covery, the American privateersman graciously said: "Well, if you won't haul down your

telers I'll haul down mine.' surprise of a similar nature

> the master of the heavily armed erchantman Hassan at the of the War of 1812 when capthe American privateer Paul Archibald Taylor of New Paul Jones was pierced for but although clearing k with her full complement she had only three cannon in the other hand, the Hassan port with her full armament cannon but with a crew of

icanism of the Paul Jones's t for on this occasion he ame of bluff with appropri-To give the Paul Jones pound sterling. ince of a fully armed ship, iff some of her spare masts

and demand required the ves-

an be no question about the

t-and they did.

ath of guns, painted them mounting them on buckets. out of his empty ports as d the master of the Hassan as such of the enemy's guns vanted and went on their way

difficult at the present day to privateersman of a century hed a strange sail on the His mind was racked beead of stumbling into a snare hope of making a rich prize. of decoy frigates were conhis thoughts and so were inof securing a fortune in a

unger might have unsuspected d defence. She might be full a piano. is concealed below, as Capt. zel of the little six gun priy Jack of Charleston dishen he attempted to board the mb ship Volcano on October

and privateering was not devoid of British property to the value of \$5,000,- | It seems that the Nerina had about This, at least, 1000? Note how your old time privateers- fifty Americans aboard as passengers, was what that Yankee skipper thought man always used figures denoting who on the approach of the cruiser

> It was with such conflicting visions that the crew of the famous American privateer America, in one of her several cruises, overhauled a strange sail which proved to be the dignified English trader Falcon. There was an air of respectability about this craft that gave promise of a rich cargo and the Yankees boarded in eager expectancy. The fear of hidden dangers having been dispelled they proceeded to investigate the cargo.

But instead of finding her hold jammed with costly East India wares or salable English goods the captors found that she was stocked with Bibles and Testaments printed in the English and Dutch languages, forwarded for distribution at the Cape of Good Hope by the British and Foreign Bible Society It is to be feared that some of the hardy tars in the privateer did not y men. Obviously the law really appreciate the value of this cargo. Anyway, it was not valueless financially, for the Falcon was sent into Bath, Me., and the books were sold to the Bible Society of Massachusetts for the nominal sum of twenty cents to the

Singular, indeed, were some of the cargoes ransacked by American privateersmen in 1812-'15. One of the prizes of the Governor Tompkins was the ship Nereid, taken off the Madeiras, imitations of heavy ord- from London for Buenos Ayres. She Archie then filled his was laden with "250 bales of dry goods, th the superfluous men and 263 packages and trunks of the same 150 casks, hogsheads and tierces of him to surrender at the first hardware and jewelry; 869 bundles of The Americans then helped iron hoops, 80 bars of iron and a quantity of coal, the entire cargo being valued at 75,000 pounds sterling."

Some of the other forms of wealth that greeted the eyes of the old time the feverish anxiety with privateersmen were brimstone, sulphur, rags, sugar, molasses, rum, wine, jerked eef, flour. Turkish carpets, tar, silks, fish, spices, nankeens, horses, tobacco. negro slaves, cocoa, coffee, gurrahs umber, osnaburgs, ballast, Madras handkerchiefs, bed ticks, gold dust, ivory, gin, India shawls, &c. When the Saucy Jack, in 1814, captured the British ship Pelham our sailors became the proud possessors of a pipe organ and

This Pelham was an exceptionally fine ship. Besides her musical outfit a strictly moderate degree and was known the strange frigate which so persistently Charleston newspaper of that day recorded that "her cabin is hung round with a great variety of large and ele- Nichols of Newburyport, Mass., when he brated Essex, Capt. David Porter, then South Carolinans ex- gant colored naval prints in rich gilt difficulty in getting back to frames, among which was a representaraft quickly enough. Indeed tion of the engagement between the cruising north of Bermuda, the Decatur

had secreted themselves in the hold and had been overlooked in the hasty hidden danger and fabulous wealth search of the brig. As the unsuspect ing prize master opened the hatches leading to the hold these Americans jumped on deck, overpowered the British prize crew and brought the brig into New London.

This episode, however, was nothing as compared to the ruse perpetrated by George Coggeshall of Rhode Island on the commander of a British man of war in 1814. The English newspapers of the day denounced it as a mean, lowdown Yankee trick," and really, it was cruel.

Coggeshall, in command of the fornidable privateer, David Porter, had been compelled to sail from the French port of La Teste before he had obtained a supply of provisions, as a British fleet was expected to blockade hat port at any moment. Scarcely had the David Porter gained an offing when a British frigate chased her se hard that Coggeshall was compelled to heave overboard his ballast and most of his casks of water before he effected his escape. On the following day he found himself at sea in the Bay of Discay with starvation staring his crew in the face.

At this juncture he fell in with eight British merchant vessels, which had become separated from their convoying war craft. Capturing four of these vessels, Coggeshall soon had the David Porter well stocked with provisions, including many luxuries, such as "butter hams, cheese, potatoes, porter, &c., with which the provident British skipper of that period knew well how to supply himself.

During the night the same British frigate. frigate that had chased Coggeshall the day before drew near again and re-Very soon after this," records Coggehall, "I heard the frigate firing at her partaking of an excellent supper a their expense.

As a rule the old time privateer comcommanded the fast privateer Decatur. On the night of August 18, 1812, when Pacific which made her famous.

that none but a Yankee frigate cou. I to escape in a badly mussed up condihave overtaken him in a fair un to tion. leeward. It was in reference to this Meantime the crafty Cadet had been incident that Rowan Stevens, son of the watching the battle from afar off. Also late Rear Admiral Thomas Holdup she had been edging closer to the Mary

Stevens, wrote: Our ship fell in with a sloop-o'-war, A Yankee privateer; We hailed for news and the sloop hove to.

And off her skipper came And boarded us in a leaky yawl With his wrathful cheek aflame

In like manner Capt. David Maffitt of the Baltimore privateer Atlas lost the fruits of his most successful cruise After a hard fought action the Atlas on August 5, 1812, captured the heavily armed and richly laden English merchant vessels Pursuit and Planter far out on the Atlantic. In the course of a month the Atlas with her two prizes

and drew near the American coast. Maffitt was beginning to congratulate himself on having successfully run the gantlet of British cruisers when, early on the morning of September 2, a provoking frigate loomed up on his hor!zon and caused the Americans to become exceedingly busy. Realizing the hopelessness of fighting, Maffitt resorted to the usual course of dividing his forces in the expectation that the stranger would devote her attention to the fast sailing privateer. Accordingly the Pursuit was ordered to tack southward, the Planter northward, while the Atlas placed herself temptingly in the course of the oncoming

This was a programme that had been successfully carried out many times by sumed the pursuit. The American American privateers in this war, the skipper now ordered all his prizes to fight loving Britisher almost invariably hoist lanterns, while he, extinguishing singling out the most formidable lookall lights, disappeared in the darkness. ing craft and in a futile pursuit of the fast sailing privateer giving her prizes the desired opportunity of escape. But unfortunate countrymen, while we were in this instance the stranger was more discerning, and with unspeakable grief

Maffitt saw the Planter recaptured. Knowing that now he could do nothmander was a thoroughly self-contained ing but seek his own safety, Maffitt reman; seldom giving expression to his turned to port with the story of his loss. in a Some weeks afterward he learned that to get angry on rare occasions. One of refused to obey well established prerare occasions happened to Capt. cedents was none other than the merrily starting on her cruise in the

good Old Ironsides, Capt. Isaac Hull, the American privateer Cumberland of six men aboard the Jane with instruc- of thrashing into the wind if pursued, which on the following day fought and Portland. Me., and she took up the tions to go through the passage between he approached the Laurel. captured the British frigate Guerriere, action with the convoying schooner After It was all over and Nichols had where the Charles Stewart had left off. recovered command of his emotions he But the Englishman proved too heavy remarked that he might have known for the Cumberland and she was glad

> and finally, observing that the escorting schooner was fully occupied with the Cumberland, the Cadet pounced upon the unprotected coaster and carried her into Thomaston. Smaller even than the Cadet and

> much older was the thirty ton privateer Fame, Capt. Green of Salem. This craft, on October 11, 1812, entered Boston harbor after a cruise of only fifteen days with five prizes bearing a singular series of names as follows: Four Sons. Four Brothers, Three Sisters, Betsey Ann and Delight. Apparently the Fame had captured the whole blessed family.

The favorite trick of the Americans of tempting the enemy's warships into worked her hazardous way westward a chase of their swift sailing craft and so diverting attention from their prizes was played in characteristic style by Capt. Thomas Boyle of the Baltimore privateer Comet in February, 1813. The Comet, while cruising off the island of St. John's in the West Indies captured the British packet Dominica of Liver pool, from Demerara bound for St. Thomas. As the Americans took possession the English cruiser Swaggerer hove in sight.

Instructing his men in the Dominica to make the best of their way through he passage between the Islands of St. John's and St. Thomas, Capt. Boyle boldly advanced toward the Swaggerer with ostentatious proffers of battle. Not that he intended his craft to become an easy prey of the powerful Britisher, for he realized that he was opposed to hope less odds, but he wished to divert the enemy's attention from the unprotected packet until that craft had made good her escape.

Figuratively speaking, Capt. Boyle tossed off his hat, ripped off his coat. threw out his chest, rolled up his sleeves, lubricated his hands, executed a nautical war dance and dared the other ellow to come on. Indeed, so far as external appearances went, the privateers man was fairly panting for a fight and only needed a few bystanders whom he could implore: "Hold me or I'll kill him" to complete the picture.

Evidently the Comet's fighting attitude suited the Swaggerer, for she increased her somewhat clumsy efforts to gain speed. Boyle encouraged this harmless ambition so far as to permit the It was in the autumn of 1814 that Englishman to come within long gun-

Tortola and St. John's, Capt. Boyle resumed his course and soon ran his enaged pursuer out of sight."

This was the Capt. Boyle who, in the following year while in command of the rivateer Chasseur, had the audacity to ause a notice to be posted in Lloyd's offee House, London, declaring that he had blockaded the entire United Kingdom. His proclamation began as fol-

Whereas it has become customary with the Admirals of Great Britain commandstates to declare all the coast of the said United States in a state of strict and rigorous blockade without possessing the power to justify such a declaration or staoning an adequate force to maintain said

Therefore I do by virtue of the power and authority in me vested, possessing sufficient force [the single privateer Chaseurl declare all the ports, harbors, bays recks, rivers, inlets, outlets, islands and eaccast of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in a state of strict and rigorous blockade.

But even Capt. Boyle could be overonfident, as was shown in an experience he had with the English war schooner St. Lawrence in February 815. As the St. Lawrence on sighting the Chasseur showed every disposition to avoid a conflict, Boyle believed that she was merely a merchant ship bound Chever, Jr. Some years after the war for Havana and undoubtedly was poorly Chever, then commanding a merchantarmed. Indeed so anxious was the stranger to escape that, in her efforts where he became acquainted with Sir to carry a greater press of sail, her James Thompson of the British warforetopmast was shattered. As the Chasseur drew near the confidence of of the War of 1812 had been fitted the privateersmen was increased by the out especially for the purpose of capfact that very few men were seen on turing Yankee privateers.

the enemy's decks. decks and rigging were swarming with izon-so badly had she outsailed the men who had been concealed. For once Dublin during the night. the wily American privateersman had their best chance was at close quar- commanded the America on ters, the Americans maintained a furious cruise?" action for fifteen minutes and carried enemy

wounded and the Americans thirteen. m were killed and fifteen in- Chesapeake and the Shannon in two was chased by a large ship which gave the shrewd commander of the little shot. Then he proceeded to tantalize three English vessels, one of which America."

nearly within gunshot a squall, from just the wrong direction, came up and blew the privateer directly into the open arms of the frigate.

Evidently the frigate's people were as surprised at this unexpected result as the privateersman, for, although they had the Governor Tompkins completely at their mercy, they fired amid such confusion that most of their shot went wild It was fully half an hour before the privateer, by making short tacks, head on to the wind, got away from "one of the most quarrelsome companions that I ever met," as Capt. Shaler grimly expressed it.

A pleasing feature of privateering in the War of 1812 was the cordiality with which some of the American and English commanders met after hostilities ceased. Few private armed craft caused so much havoc in British commerce as the America of Salem. During the war she secured twenty-six prizes, their cargoes realizing on sale \$1,100,000, while the amount of the enemy's property she destroyed at sea was represented by a much larger sum She was chased many times by English cruisers, but always managed to es-

During her third and fourth cruises she was commanded by Capt. man, was in the harbor of Valparaiso ship Dublin, which craft at the time

One day when Capt. Chever was din-All these circumstances led Capt. ing with Sir James the latter remarked Boyle to believe that he would make that on a certain occasion, just at dusk, easy capture of this vessel, so he dis- he was almost within gunshot of the pensed with the usual preparations for America, the vessel he was especially battle. When within pistol shot, how- anxious to capture, as she had done so ever, the St. Lawrence unmasked ten much damage to British commerce, but guns to a side and poured in a de- that by daylight on the following mornstructive fire, and in an instant her ing she was a mere speck on the hor-

"And by the way," continued Sir been caught napping. Believing that James "I wonder if you know who

Capt. Chever admitted that he was the St. Lawrence by boarding, the the man, whereupon "Sir James laughed having forty men killed or and said that he wished that he (Chever) had been as near to him then Earlier in the war Capt. Nathaniel as he was now and assured him that Shaler of New York found also that it if captured he would have been kindly was very easy to fall over the brink of treated and made comfortable. Capt extreme audacity. On Christmas Day, Chever smiled and replied that, in spite 1812, while in command of the privateer of his unquestioned hospitality, he had Governor Tompkins, he fell in with felt much more at home on board the